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30 July 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Inspector General

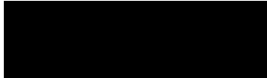
SUBJECT : Personnel Office

REFERENCE : Your Memorandum dated 1 July 1953 Subject as
above

1. I received and read with much interest your memorandum relating to your current survey on the effectiveness of the personnel function within the Agency. I know of no aspect of our administrative process that deserves more careful attention at all levels of the organization. I have always considered that the very essence of management is personnel management, and that without effective personnel administration the other problems of the Administrator become almost impossible of resolution.

2. I take it from your memorandum that you would like my comments on the effectiveness of the present personnel program, and that further you desire any suggestions that I may have for its improvement. In addition you ask for the number of individuals in this office concerned with personnel management. May I dispose of the last detail first? We have in the Logistics Office, at the present time, two persons concerned with personnel management, as follows:

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 Personnel Officer ----- GS-12
Personnel Clerk ----- GS-5

Our table of organization authorizes an additional clerical position and an additional professional position for a Training Officer. It is my opinion that this staff is wholly inadequate to perform even the minimum personnel servicing required at this level. This is particularly true since the administration of the Logistics Career Program, the development of which is in its initial phase, is the responsibility of this small personnel unit.

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AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 29/06/81 REVIEWER: 018935

Effectiveness of the Present Personnel Program

3. The principal assistance we have come to expect from the Personnel Office is in the recruitment of personnel and the processing of personnel papers. On several occasions we have requested assistance from the Covert Personnel Division in recruiting urgently needed professional personnel such as Contract Officers and Construction Engineers. Such requests have always been met by excellent cooperation from the personnel people, and have brought good results. The fact that the recruitment of new people in general has lagged, and that we have been handicapped by serious staff shortages, perhaps should not be offered as a criticism of the Personnel Office because of the many problems and deterrents to effective recruitment unique to this Agency. However, I believe that the Personnel Office, being aware of these obstacles in maintaining a full and effective workforce, should have examined the possibility of developing a device by which a number of persons in general occupational areas which the Agency requires would be continuously in the pipe line, but not slotted against any particular position. I have requested my Administrative Staff to discuss the possibilities of such an arrangement with the Personnel Office, and attempt to develop in cooperation with them some device by which we could have available personnel of the type needed when needed.

4. Aside from the assistance from the Personnel Office in recruiting and processing, I would be less than frank if I did not say we have received little or no help. The classification function, for example, seems to me to supply little or no assistance to management. Position classification can only be effective when closely integrated with management and when realistic and clear specifications exist within the framework of a coordinated plan. If such specifications exist within this Agency, I am not aware of them. This Agency has elected, and perhaps wisely, not to apply the specifications, position groupings, and in general the classification plan established through years of experience under the U.S. Civil Service Commission. It has not, however, developed a substitute.

5. It is in the field of placement that I feel that the present personnel organization is of least assistance. There does not appear to be any usable personnel placement file of the qualifications of the individuals presently employed in the Agency. Such a file may exist, but I have seen no evidence of it. In this field also, this Agency has elected not to use the qualification standards established over a period of years by committees of technicians, operating officials, specialists, and scientists operating under the direction of the Civil Service Commission. This decision again is perhaps wise, but no definite qualifications have been established within the Agency as a substitute. Lacking

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an effective qualifications file and qualification standards, personnel placement can only be arbitrary and haphazard, and each placement action becomes an extended process of negotiation. The difference is that between the higgling and haggling required in making a purchase at a bazaar in Shanghai and the straight forward type of purchase one makes in a one-price American department store. The Career Service Board, I believe, provides an excellent opportunity to overcome the present defects in our placement work, and in the Logistics Office we are placing great stress upon the careful development of this program. A Career Service Program, however, does not spring into existence upon the publication of a directive. Much work must be done before it can be a truly effective and useful tool of management. The Logistics Office Career Service Board has requested the Administrative Staff of this Office to develop the machinery for carrying out the career service program. This machinery must include a current roster of all employees throughout the Agency under the jurisdiction of the Logistics Career Service Board. This roster, while not duplicating the basic agency personnel file must include certain information necessary for the planning of individual employees' careers. Data such as availability for overseas service, number of dependents, overseas tours completed, personnel evaluation, expiration of present tour of duty, and similar information is necessary for a thoroughly effective placement, training and career planning program. Also necessary is at least a rough set of qualification standards for the various positions in the logistics field.

6. The important function of employee relations, employee counseling, personal service, or advice and assistance to employees can only be performed at the operating level. I understand that an employee relations service is provided at present somewhere in the Personnel Office. If such is the case, I can only say that it serves the sole purpose of accumulating questionable statistics on employee turnover as the employees leave the Agency. This, of course, is not employee relations.

7. I have no comment to make upon the maintenance of the Central Personnel Records and Files. These files at present, from my experience, appear to be current and adequate, and with few exceptions I have had no difficulty in obtaining promptly such records as I have from time to time required. I have observed in the government that there often develops a duplication of personnel records at various levels of administration and to this I am strongly opposed. The present system appears to me to be entirely satisfactory and with the exception of the addition of the minimum records required for the operation of the Career Service Board, I see no reason for a change.

Recommendation for Organization Modifications to Bring About More Effective Personnel Administration

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8. I am a strong believer in decentralization of administration to the lowest possible operating level, consistent with the maintenance of strong centralized control. However, I have the impression that in this Agency this concept in the personnel field is exactly reversed. What we presently have is a high centralization of personnel administration with a high decentralization of control. In other words the personnel office handles the papers, but exercises little or no direction. The central Personnel Office in my opinion should consist of a small group of highly trained, competent, experienced professional persons of broad vision. The Office should devote its entire time, with the exception of the few operating functions outlined below, to the development and promulgation of plans, procedures, standards, specifications, and guidance. It should not be handicapped as at present in carrying out its top level mission by the necessity of engaging in routine paper processing and the carrying out of the clerical functions inevitably associated with the Administration of a Personnel Program. The Personnel Office at this top level once having established and promulgated standards, procedures, and policies would then be able to exercise control through an inspection and review staff which would assist operating offices in setting up the machinery to carry out the plans and policies it has developed. This staff would also periodically inspect, review, and report upon the efficacy of the personnel program throughout the Agency and insure that established standards, plans, and policies are being adhered to at all levels.

9. I would recommend likewise, as I have suggested in an earlier paragraph, that the basic personnel records of the Agency be maintained centrally and be made available to the operating offices as required. If these files cannot be made available promptly when needed, it may be necessary to re-examine this function.

10. Recruiting likewise can be performed more efficiently and less expensively if centralized. I would, therefore, recommend that this function remain a part of the Central Personnel Office as an operating function. However, I have the impression that far greater use could be made of the extensive recruiting facility presently available elsewhere in the Agencies of the Federal Government for the recruitment of clerical and administrative personnel, particularly at the junior levels. The use of these facilities, I believe, would permit the direction of our own recruiting efforts toward the acquisition of the more unusual and specialized skills required so extensively by this Agency.

11. With the exception of the above, I believe that the actual day to day administration of the personnel program should be delegated to the lowest possible level. No intervening personnel functionaries should

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be necessary or authorized. This plan contemplates small personnel offices at the operating level exercising delegated authority in applying the standards and policies established by the Central Personnel Office and subject to review and inspection by the technical staff of that office. It is evident, I believe, from what I have said that I would not recommend such decentralization prior to the establishment and promulgation of sound and definite policies, procedures, and standards. I believe that should some program similar to the recommendations I have outlined above be adopted, it would result not only in a far more effective personnel program, and hence the overall improvement of management, but would at the same time make possible a considerable reduction in the work force presently concerned with personnel administration in the Agency.

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JAMES A. GARRISON
Chief of Logistics

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